

New London County Historical Society

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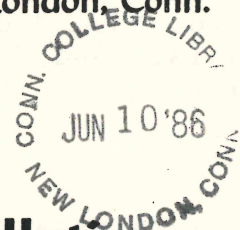
SHAW MANSION

New London, Conn.

Quarterly



Bulletin



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No.1

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

George Stone of North Stonington, has combined his memoirs and the history of the town in a book entitled CRACKER BARREL CHRONICLES, published by the North Stonington Historical Society. The first volume is now available and the second should be by next year. It is in either hard cover for \$22.50 plus \$1.58 tax, or soft cover for \$12.50 plus \$.83 tax. Shipping is included in both prices. To buy send check and order to:

North Stonington Historical Society
P.O. Box 134
North Stonington, Conn. 06359

Henry L. Ferguson's FISHERS ISLAND has been reprinted for the third time in a hard cover book, priced at \$15.00. No mention was made of shipping, but it would probably be advisable to send an extra \$1.25. Connecticut residents do not have to pay the New York State tax. To buy send order and check to:

Harbor Hill Books, Inc.
P.O. Box 407
Harrison, N.Y. 10528

RUG FOR THE DINING ROOM

There is a beautiful new (to us) rug in the dining room now, sorely needed. It is a bit larger than the previous one, an Indo-Ahar Heriz, in lovely soft colors, tan being the background, with the design in several colors, one of them the blue of the woodwork. It makes the room seem a bit larger than it did before, and blends beautifully with the red fireplace wall and the bright rug in the drawing room. Money was set aside from what was willed to us by Ruth Newcomb, for the curator to buy a rug, and fortunate she was to find the size to say nothing of an appropriate pattern and the right colors. This fits all categories, and it is to be hoped you all approve of it as highly as we do.

GARDENING

Thanks in most part to the custodian, Janet Miceli, the gardens at the Mansion have undergone what might be termed blood transfusions, or most of them. She

has dug bags and bags of peatmoss into them, at least those in back of the house, fertilized, divided and set plants back, mulched with more bags and bags of pine bark, and then edged the two large gardens by the flagstone walk, with bricks. In spite of all the good intentions in the world, the curator fell by the wayside with a strained back and could be of no help until the work was almost finished. She did get better in time to help with planting new perennials and annuals. And Janet is intending to do the same to the gardens in front, next spring.

IN MEMORIAM

The black-haired, four-legged hostess of the Shaw Mansion, Tallyho, is gone. She died very suddenly in March, leaving a void in the life of her owner and the same at the Mansion. She had lived there for most of her nine-plus years, welcoming visitors, warding off those she deemed intruders, even keeping workmen penned in the cellar, so they couldn't continue work elsewhere until they were rescued. She loved large groups of people as most of you probably realized from seeing her when we had a party here. She was in heaven with busloads of visitors and classes of schoolchildren, and they enjoyed her just as much, all of them patting her, photographing her, and the children leading her all around the Mansion, taking turns holding her leash. She has attended luncheons, dinners, and lectures, although the latter were something to be suffered through until it came time for the hors d'oeuvres. She felt the wide windowsills had been made especially for her and would lie on any one of them, keeping a careful eye on those approaching. Occasionally, still, the curator thinks she sees a furry black body curled up on a sill, and who knows, perhaps, just perhaps, she does.

ACCESSIONS

- Historic Buildings at Mystic Seaport Museum, by William N. Peterson and Peter M. Coope, 1985 - Gift of William N. Peterson.
 2 copies, Facsimile of George Washington's Accounts with the U.S. - Gift of Norman Boas, M.D.
 Col. Jonathan Palmer's War Diary, Stonington, 1774-5 - Gift of Norman Boas, M.D.
 Loyalist Lineages of Canada, Lynn A. Morgan, editor, 1984 - Anonymous donor
 Genealogy & History of the Derthick & related Derricks, by Jack T. Spencer - Anonymous donor.
 The Church on the Hill, History of 2nd Congregational Church, by Betty W. Morrison - Gift of Rev. Norman MacLeod, Jr.
 Vital REcords of Saybrook Colony, Elizabeth B. Plimpton, editor, 1985 - Bought by Society.
 Ancestors & Descendants of Henry Wood GARDner & Mary Brown Rathbone, by Ellen Gardner Brown, 1985 - Gift of author.
 Seabury Traditions, the Reconstructed Journal of Connecticut's First Diocesan, by Kenneth Walter Cameron, 1985. 2. v. - Gift of author.
 Connecticut's First Diocesan, supplemnt to Seabury Traditions, by K.W.Cameron - Gift of author.
 The Maryes of Virginia, comp. by Edith W. Eberhart & Adaline Marye Robertson, 1985 - Gift of authors.
 Indo-Ahah Heriz Oriental rug for dining room, 10 x 14" - Bought by Society.
 Turkish rug, 71" x 28" - Gift of Alexander Kalamian.
 Wilton rug, Oriental copy, 4½" x 25" - Gift of Alexander Kalamian.
 5 vols. Harper's Weekly, during Civil War, 2 account books, Russell Burrows' Civil War commissions & discharge, bottle with bark-rigged vessel inside, (bottle stamped "E.V.Stoddard & Co., Apothecaries, New London, Conn.), sampler, 18 x 16½", worked by Mary Ann Rogers, 1826 - All gifts of Hiram D. Harris, Harwich, Mass.

Wedding dress, shoes and gloves, of Anna Charlotte Johansson, who married Capt. Gustaf Larson, 1913 - Gift of Mr. & Mrs. EVERETT Larson.

A STAR IS NOT BORN

During the last week in May, the curator was called by a reporter from Channel 30 in Hartford, wanting to make an appointment to talk about the history of New London and shoot some of the photographs of 19th century New London. So, being an agreeable soul, she said she'd meet them in the morning at the Mansion, early photographs in hand. They chose those they wanted to use and got explanations of them, and then with no warning, the camera was aimed at the aforesaid curator and a microphone held out to her, while the reporter asked a few questions about the city's history. She answered, but minus a great deal of her usual aplomb, for Barbara Walters she is not. This was to appear that evening on the news, and having made a point to see Channel 30, your curator was delighted that some of the conversation had been cut and she appeared for only a very few seconds. It is supposed that this has something to do with the state's 350th anniversary. One thing is very clear, though, Barbara Walters doesn't need to worry about competition from here!

RECOLLECTIONS OF A LONG LIFE

Reminiscences of Sarah Ann Weaver Newcomb (cont. from Dec.)

At one time Father kept bees, having several hives. It was a busy, rushing time when they swarmed. Beating on tin pans we made all noise possible to induce them to settle quickly as they often did on the branch of a tree nearby. Then Father, with a veil tied over his hat and with thick gloves, would place the hive beneath, and with a pole gently knock off the big back bunch and usually they would go at once and commence work in their new home, but sometimes they wandered far and it was an effort to collect them. Mr. Miner, our next neighbor, also had several hives. After the death of his wife, Grandma Grace asked Father "If Mr. Miner had told the bees that there had been a death in the family?" adding that "if he did not the bees would leave and not return." So the bees were notified of his loss. This was an old saying among bee keepers.

On the 21st of June 1913 our dear Auntie Turner, wife of Uncle Peter Comstock Turner, passed on to her eternal rest. For months she had gradually failed. There was but little suffering. It was a beautiful closing to a long and beautiful life, like a shock of corn fully ripe ready for the garner. She was born in Norway, N.Y., on July 27th, 1815, married to my uncle on October 15th 1835 and came to New London a bride to the house on Golden St. she belonged to a generation fast passing away. Those who loved her most had hoped that this beautiful life might have been prolonged to the century mark. She was of a most gentle, courteous, kindly nature, alike to all. As I have told of my endearing love for her in the earlier part of my journal I will not repeat, but only add that I felt a personal loss in this great sorrow to her family to a large circle of admiring friends. For many years she was a devoted member of the First Baptist Church in New London, Conn. She gave four thousand dollars towards the new chapel. Her funeral occurred on June 25th inst. She was a picture as she lay encased in the color of royalty with soft folds of Lisse and a bunch of purple orchids on her breast. A profusion of elegant flowers in a variety of forms were all about her. The service was conducted by her pastor Rev. Charles K. McNally, also assisted by the Rev. Phillip A. Nordell of Brookline, a former pastor.

A prayer, which she had for years daily repeated, was ready by request of the family and then she was borne to her final rest to await the Resurrection morn.

On July 6th, 1913 I passed my eighty-eighth birthday. I had kept it very quiet as there is such a temptation for reporters of the daily papers to chronicle the age of all octogenarians, and I had no wish to be publicly announced.

I dined with Frederic and family and passed a delightful day, Edith taking me home in the electric car. I am glad to have lived so many years, to have seen so much of modern invention and improvement, and thankful that I am able to care for myself in a general manner. I have lived sixteen years longer than any member of my family, none of whom survived beyond seventy-two years. A sister of my father, Aunt Mary Arnold of Rhode Island, died at the age of ninety-six years. I am living alone with my two maids who are ever ready to contribute to my comfort, and I am blessed with a host of friends, whose expression of love, are a source of great pleasure in my lonely life. Much of sorrow has come to me these past years, but through it all I have been enabled to see and feel the hand of my Heavenly Father, who "doeth all things well."

A little incident regarding Aunt Mary Arnold was told me quite recently. She was a very independent old lady and when in her last illness persisted in getting up and making her bed and when told that she was thought to be dying, replied "that she was glad of it."

On Tuesday, August 12, 1913, in company with Frederic, his wife, Clara and Cornelia I motored to Newport in their fine family car. I went to visit my old and dear friends, Rev. Dr. and Mrs. McKeever. I found them located in a pretty, tasteful home and they gave me a cordial welcome. They were our neighbors across the street for sixteen years and there was much of old times to be rehearsed. Dr. McKeever is settled over one of the city churches and enjoys a very appreciative people. On our trip we stopped near the ocean at Narragansett Pier for our lunch. Not finding a shade near, we wandered over the jagged rocks till we found a convenient spot where we satisfied our ravenous appetites, even to the luxury of hot coffee from the modern lunch box. The broad ocean before us as far as the eye could reach. During the visit we drove with our friends through the city, taking in the Ocean Drive and much of the surrounding country. Several battleships were in the harbor. The family stayed at one of the fine hotels, and the girls found friends and were invited to an afternoon tea. Hattie came to tea at Mrs. McKeever's. On our return we stopped for dinner at the "Weakapaug Hotel" at Westerly. The hotel is a summer resort right on the ocean and from the extended veranda a flight of steps leads quite down to the spiles, where the foaming, rushing waters play in and out with the utmost freedom. It was an ideal trip, ever to be remembered with pleasure.

On November 27, 1913, for the first time, The Thanksgiving Dinner was served at the Post Hill house. It was a relief to me that it was anticipated by Frederic and Hattie, as after the sorrows of the past years I did not feel equal to the effort. There was a fine dinner with all the usual accompaniments and more. A little farmyard graced the center of the table, the favors were tasteful and beautiful, lovely flowers and garlands were about the room. Two handsomely browned turkeys gave zest to the appetite. Elizabeth had come up from New York and Ruth had for her guests Mr. & Mrs. and Miss Morgan from Hartford, delightful young people. A pretty social tea was served in the parlor and later in the evening a few young people came by invitation for a dance and thus another Thanksgiving Day was added to the many that have preceded it in the family life's circle.

December 25th, Christmas Day (same year) I was alone, the family following the usual custom going to Mrs. Chapell. But I had many gifts and pleasant remembrances from them, and others to tell me that though I was alone I was by no means forgotten. How thoughtful and beautiful everyone was to me! I feel at times that I cannot fully appreciate the love and devotion of my dear son and his dear family for my comfort and needs. The company of my granddaughter Clara is one of my greatest blessings in these long, winter days. She is indeed a great treasure.

On February 2nd, 1914, my daughter-in-law Elizabeth, with my granddaughter (Ruth and her friend Helen Whiton, sailed on the "SS Rotterdam, Holland American Line" for a trip to the Orient. General Barlow, with cousin Alice, were also of the party and we bade them adieu with a hearty wish and prayer for a pleasant voyage and safe return. There were over 800 passengers on the ship.

Cousin Alice Barlow and her husband, Gen. BARlow (retired) were of the party. On Febuary 26th inst. came the sad and startling news that Gen. BARlow had died very suddenly in Jerusalem. Cousin Alice remained with the ship till it got to Naples, then left in a steamer for home. She went directly to washington, D.C. to await the arrival of the General's body. He was finally interred in Arlington Cemetery, with full military honors, after which she came to her old home. In seven short months she was bereft of mother and husband.

About the middle of June, 1914, my dear Clara, who had been with me for eight months, returned to her home. Hoe I missed her loving presence is beyond words! I was recovering from a very discouraging illness, and the loneliness seemed hard to bear, but she needed her time and it was for the best that she should have it, but the remembrance of the pleasant time together will always be held dear.

July 27, 1914. On JUne 21st our travelers returned from their foreign trip and were gladly welcomed after their five month absence. There was much to tell, and many pretty things to exhibit. Elizabeth soon came for a few days and then left for Kushaqua for the rest of the summer.

July 6, 1914 I passed my 89th birthday. It was pleasantly remembered by my dear son and family with cards and letters full of good wishes from many friends. On the 22nd inst. I went with the Sunday School picnic to Golden Spur- assisted in spreading sandwiches and cutting cake for the dinner. Met several new members of the church and several old friends whom I had not seen in many years. It all gave me much that was pleasant to recall. Made the trip in the open cars with the School. Perhaps I was thought by some persons too old to indulge in such frivolity, but the pleasure expressed at my presence gave me a heart throb of joy that I shall not soon forget. I preserved by decorum by not engaging in baseball or dancing the Tango, though I offered tickets to some slightly younger than myself.

I joined the First Baptist Church by baptism March 6th, 1841 - have now been a member of this church seventy-three years, march 28th, 1914. My husband James Newcomb, joined the church November 1842, perhaps the 16th, chosen Deacon January 26th, 1852, served 56 years.

August 4th, 1914. Mrs. Martha Ball, a niece, came for a visit. It was a long time since we had met and both had grown gray with the passing years. I should not have known her, but she was kind enough to say that I retained somewhat of my old look. Ten days, in which were pleasant drives given us by Ruth and Frederic, were passed delightfully, when she left to visit her sister in New Britain.

August 23rd, 1914. As I sit alone, minor incidents of my younger days throng my memory. When I was married FAtther gave me seven dollars as a wedding present. I had never before had so large a sum to expend as I pleased. What I needed of food and clothing were provided for me. Mother owned a Dry Goods store, which provided much of clothing. Father, in company with Mr. Daniel Rogers, owned and kept a grocery and ship chandlery store, which supplied much food. What more did I need" Sister Emma would go to the stores and buy things and then tell Mother that they were charged, but I never thought of taking such liberty.

THE END

Please don't forget to sne us your change of address.

Mr. & Mrs. J. Denis Miceli - Resident Custodians
Mrs. Adam L. Knox - Curator & Secretary

Office - 443-1209

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